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## Italy

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### Former Italian MinAG De Castro Head of the EU AG Committee

#### Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

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#### Report Highlights:

Paolo De Castro, Italian Socialist politician and former Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies selected as chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

#### Executive Summary:

#### General Information:

##### **Paolo De Castro, Newly Elected Chair of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee**

Paolo De Castro (born 2 February 1958), Italian politician (Socialist Party), and former Italian Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies has been confirmed as Chair of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee in Brussels.. Representing the left-wing Socialists and Democrats (S+D) group, De Castro is now likely to become a key figure in the CAP budget debates which will certainly gain momentum over the coming years. The former Minister has taken charge of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee at a time when many changes are expected within the European Parliament. As he is relatively new to the European Parliament, he may be forced to quickly learn how to adapt to a rather complex inter-institutional negotiating arena.

#### **Other Members of the Agriculture Committee**

The other major party groupings are all represented in the Committee's four vice-chair positions: Romanian MEP Rare-Lucian Niculescu (European People's Party), French farmer-turned-politician José Bové (Greens), sitting Polish vice-chair Janusz Wojciechowski (European Conservatives and Reformists) and Swedish liberal Marit Paulsen (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats of Europe).

### **De Castro's Extensive Agricultural and Farm Policy Experience**

De Castro replaces UK Conservative and former EPP member Neil Parish. De Castro is widely respected and has an extensive agricultural and farm policy background. De Castro previously served as the Italian Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies. From January 2001 to May 2004 he Chaired the "Nomisma" Economics' Studies Institute. He also Chaired the Qualivita Foundation and currently runs the international agricultural policy magazine, L'Informatore Agrario.

He is a professor of Agricultural Economics at the Veterinary Medicine University of Bologna, the Georgofili Agricultural Economics Academy of Florence, the Agriculture Academy of Pesaro and the National Academy of Treja. From 1996 to 1998 he was the Economic Advisor of Prime Minister Romano Prodi and the Economic Advisor of the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Michele Pinto. From 1 June to 31 December 2000 he was appointed as special Advisor of the EU Commission's President, and from 21 October 1998 to 25 April 2000 he served as Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Policies in both Governments chaired by Massimo D'Alema. On November 2000, Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi awarded him the "Cavaliere di Gran Croce al merito della Repubblica Italiana" merit honor. He is the scientific coordinator of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) in Paris, and scientific Director of the Genio Rurale Magazine. He is also member of the Italian Agricultural Economists' Society (SIDEA) and of the European Agricultural Economics Association (EAEA).

Candidate at the Italian Political Elections held in April 2006 with the Olive Tree list, he was elected in the XV Legislature, and appointed Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies in the Government chaired by Romano Prodi. In 2009 he was elected to the European Parliament, and currently serves as the Chair of the Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development. He is married and has two sons.

### **Food Laws:**

### **Pesticides and Other Contaminants:**